Pam. Federation 937

WORLD NEEDS A CHURCH HEARTILY ONE

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WORLD NEEDS A CHURCH HEARTILY ONE

PHILLIPS BROOKS once said of the church of Christ that it ought to he "a universal solvent, lying back of all our differences, and composing them." If that is indeed the function of the church, it was never more needed in the world than just now. Even before the outbreak of the war, divisive forces were at work which seriously threatened the welfare of society and hampered the coming of the kingdom of God. Race prejudice, class strife, religious bigotry, sectional antagonisms, were splitting mankind into hostile fragments. The war has intensified all these centrifugal tendencies. It is time for the church to heed the call of the Spirit which is in her, and to reveal herself as the unifying force, the solvent, that can compose the differences of humanity.

The Evil Spirit of Division Must Be Utterly Cast Out

But if the church is ever to do this work —the greatest piece of work waiting to be done just now—she must first let God cast out from herself the demon of division, and fill her with the spirit of generous, comprehensive unity. The church cannot unify until she is herself unified. And the only practicable way to oneness lies through generosity of spirit, largeness of view, which shall enable men of positive convictions to unite heartily, without suspicion or reserve, with men who differ from them on many matters, yet are one with them on the great essentials of the Christian faith and life.

If we desire our beloved Presbyterian Church to have this season prove the best year in her history, the year of the boldest and most effective service of God and his kingdom, we ought to pray fervently for that unity of spirit and of action for which our Lord prayed on the night before Calvary. We should earnestly covet the power to stand before a divided, distracted world as an inspiring and appealing example of the beauty and force of united and brotherly faith and action.

Are we ready to do this? The worst and most real danger confronting our church is that we shall not be big enough, Christly enough, to stand by such a comprehensive policy. There are signs of reaction toward timid policies and narrow views and the spirit of dogmatism. Every loyal Presbyterian should stand against these reactionary tendencies with all his strength. The danger is that, in a day that calls for a big, brave, generous, comprehensive, Christly church, ready to hold in abeyance everything but the essentials of faith and practice, our church shall be frightened into reaction, dominated by a partisan view of life and work and Christianity, left swirling helplessly in an eddy of little thoughts and things, while the mighty current of the life of God's spirit in the world goes sweeping past. That is the danger we need to fear, for deliverance from which we need to pray and labor and speak out.

This is Christ's great day, if we will make it so, if we will drop our petty concerns and follow him. All things are calling us just now to give ourselves and our church to the primary things, and to keep out of the way all secondary things, however good and true, however much we prize them. At so critical a moment as this, the Episcopalian who holds essential his particular theory of the church, the Baptist who holds vital his particular view of the sacraments, the Presbyterian who counts essential the

theology which distinguishes him from other evangelical Christians, are guilty of something like treason in wartime. It is time to rally to the defense of our common Christianity, and to let our private, partisan, and denominational peculiarities shift for themselves. If they die, so much gain for the kingdom of God!

Men To-day Must Work With Fellow Christians

In the presence of this warring, suffering, divided, sin-cursed world, agonizing for the redemption which can come to it only through Christ and his gospel, the man who would waste any of the church's energy in whittling fine points of dogma, the man who would split up rather than bind up, the man who would force his personal convictions upon the whole church or refuse to work in fullest possible accord with all whom he acknowledges to be Christians, is taking a course un-Christian and inhuman, piling up for himself a weighty responsibility for the time when he shall stand before the Judge revealed in the twenty-fifth chapter of the gospel according to Matthew.

The great need to-day is that the whole church move into, and abide in the spirit of Paul's noble words, written to a church in danger of division, "For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Into such a comprehensive unity we need to be led just now—that big, generous, fearless attitude which is our birthright as Presbyterians and as Christians.

Would that the Spirit of God might put into the hearts of liberals and conservatives, of all party men in our church, that spirit which saved the church in its earliest

days. There was serious danger of division as Christianity moved on its way from a Jewish sect to world religion. One party held to the past; the other reached out toward the future. There are always those two parties in a living church of the living God. Each side felt that there was danger in the other. But the leaders of the church had enough of the spirit of their Lord to see that the real danger was that the church would be divided; and, by the grace of the Spirit of Christ, they held together. "James, and Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars"—men who stood fast, conservatives, loyal to Christian traditions—"gave the right hand of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas"—moving "pillars' of cloud and fire—and a united church, in which men who differed widely trusted each other with loving and frank confidence, move irresistibly upon the heathen world.

Cannot our beloved church rise into the same big, brotherly spirit? We, too, have come to a critical day, when the world cannot be delivered save by a church which is heartily one in generous love and confidence.

It is a time, if ever there was one, when all reasonable, moderate men, all who put spirit above forms and unity above party advantage, should hold together in that "love which is the bond of perfectness." It is a time for a real brotherly union of liberals and conservatives, which shall suspect no one, accuse no one, and exclude only those who will not live in Christian faith, hope and love with their brethren. "If any man loveth not the Lord let him (and no one else) be anathema." But "grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible." It is a time, therefore, for outspoken, though reasonable, protest against any attempts, direct or indirect, to drive our church into a narrow, extreme, or partisan position.

Extreme Partisans Must Not Dominate Brother Hearts

Whenever extremists—whether they be extreme radicals or extreme reactionaries—attempt to impose their views as authoritative and decisive for the entire church, the whole body of moderate men, who put love and service first, should unite to hold the church steady in its historic position (sanctioned by the Bible and by our standards) of a union based on the great essentials, and strong confidence and fearless freedom as to all else.

The most serious danger confronting us is that our great church, so needed today, so wonderfully fitted for the work of God just now, may be driven by vague fears into a corner where it shall sit hugging to itself certain dear non-essentials, while the great movements of God and man and the kingdom go on their way to a victory which we, of our sins, may not share.

God keep us from such a fate! "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together even now, waiting for the revealing of the sons of God." It is only as the church of Christ, in this crisis, rises above small things into the mind of Christ, that we can hope that "the creation itself may be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

"Come then! Since all things call us,
The living and the dead;
And o'er the weltering tangle
A glimmering light is shed;
Come then! Let us cast off fooling;
For this at least we know,
That the dawn and the day are coming,
And forth the banners go."

Reprint, The Continent.

Pam. Federation 937

SUGGESTIONS

for State and Local Federations

ISSUED BY THE COMMISSION ON STATE AND LOCAL FEDERATIONS

1914

FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AMERICA
105 EAST TWENTY-SECOND STREET, NEW YORK CITY

DEFINITIONS

(1) **A State Federation** is an inter-denominational body, the members of which are elected, or otherwise officially appointed, as representatives of the denominational organizations within a state.

Emphasis is placed upon the official and denominational character of the membership. A voluntary organization, composed of persons who assemble on their own initiative, is not a federation, even though those persons should all be officials of different denominations. It is needful that the denominational organizations by some act of their own create, or authorize, their representation.

(2) **A Local Federation** is an inter-denominational body the members of which are elected by the membership of several local churches, or are appointed by Committees or Officials of these respective churches, duly authorized, as representatives of the entire church.

In this case the entire church is emphasized. A combination of Men's Clubs may be called a Federation, and may exercise the functions of a federation; but it should not properly be called a church federation. The church includes male and female, young and old; and any organization, or union of organizations, the membership of which is limited, as to sex, or age, or special function, narrower than that of the entire church, is not properly a church federation.

(3) **Community Churches**, under the spirit of federation, have now taken on four distinct forms:—

a. *The Denominational Church.* Because of its connection, through its denominational organizations, with world-wide tasks of evangelization, this church alone fully meets the New Testament ideal of a church equipped to carry out the Master's plan of preaching the Gospel to every creature.

b. *The Multi-Denominational Church*, or *The Federated Church.* This is a church in which two or more denominational churches, without sacrificing their separate existence and denominational connections, unite for the maintenance of common worship in one congregation with one pastor, and in

the maintenance of other church services and affiliated societies.

c. *The Inter-Denominational Church,* or *The Church of Federated Christians.* This is composed of individuals united for local church purposes who do not sever their membership in denominational churches elsewhere, but maintain a dual church membership.

d. *The Undenominational Church,* commonly known as *The Union Church.* This is purely a local church, sustaining no denominational connection itself, the members of which also are without denominational connection.

Such a church as this has been tried in many communities for a long term of years; and in almost every instance has been found unsatisfactory. Nine serious charges can be brought against it: (1) It lacks associational fellowship; (2) it lacks outside supervision; (3) it lacks an adequate source of ministerial supply; (4) it has no approved literature, and helps create none; (5) it has no connection with religious education in a responsible way, by helping to support academies, colleges, theological schools and seminaries; (6) it carries on no Home Mission work for the Immigrants, the Indian, the Negroes, or for the pioneer and needy settlements of the country; (7) it has no wide vision of world tasks and the extension of the Kingdom of Christ amongst all nations; (8) ordinarily it lacks an adequate system of truth; many denominational churches may fail to receive instruction of any large and comprehensive character, but the union church necessarily fails of it; and (9) in experience the union church has proven to be, unfortunately too many times, a church of discord and dissention. These are serious charges and so nearly true are they that well-wishers of a community no longer advise the establishment of a union church; but seek rather the formation of denominational churches.

NUMBER OF FEDERATIONS.

The Directory of State and Local Federations, published by the Federal Council in 1914, contains

information respecting one hundred and thirty-four federations, twenty-one of which are State Federations; ninety-seven, City Federations; and sixteen are County Federations. Massachusetts has more federations than any other state, twenty-five in number, including the State Federation. New Jersey has six city federations and seven county federations. Pennsylvania reports six city federations and six county federations. New York has a state federation, eight city federations, and one county federation. California and Ohio are next in order each reporting six city federations and a state federation. One federation is listed in the city of Honolulu, Hawaii. Thirty-three of the forty-eight states of the Union, or two-thirds, have federations within their borders, and at least five other states have federations in process of formation.

DATES OF ORGANIZATION.

The oldest federation is the Christian League of Methuen, Massachusetts, dating from 1887. The oldest state federation is the Interdenominational Commission of Maine, initiated in 1890. Of one hundred and seventeen federations which give the date of their organization, ninety-six, or 82%, were organized in the years 1909 to 1913, the five years immediately following the organization of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

NAMES.

A great variety of names appears in the list. League occurs twice, Union twice, Association once, Commission three times, Council seventeen times and Federation one hundred and one times, while seven times the simple word "churches" is used preceded by a qualifying adjective such as Federated, as "The Federated Churches of————". The following adjectives and nouns used as adjectives, are employed:—Comity, social service, general, protestant, united, provisional state, civic and coöperative once each; Christian three times; the qualifying phrase "of churches and Christian workers" three times; and " and religious organizations" three times; "of churches" is used fifty-two times; "church," qualifying some other noun, is

used twenty-two times; "inter-church" occurs thirty-eight times; "inter-denominational" four times; and "federated" ten times. The adjective and noun of most frequent occurrence, therefore, are, "Inter-church" and "Federation."

DENOMINATIONS FEDERATED.

Denominations appear in the following number of federations:—

Denominations	Number of Different Federations
Methodist Episcopal Church, North	117
Baptist Churches, North	113
Congregational Churches	98
Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. (North)	90
Protestant Episcopal Church	71
Christian Church	52
Lutheran Church, General Synod	44
United Presbyterian Church	42
United Brethren Church	37
Disciples of Christ	30
Evangelical Association	27
Friends	25
African Methodist Episcopal Church	20
Methodist Protestant Church	20
Methodist Episcopal Church (South)	18
Free Baptist Churches	16
Reformed Church in America	16
Reformed Church in the U. S.	16
German Evangelical Synod	15
African Methodist Episcopal Church (Zion)	14
National Baptist Convention (Colored)	10
Primitive Methodist Church	10
Presbyterian Church in the U. S. (South)	9
Reformed Episcopal Church	9
Welsh Presbyterian Church	9
Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod	7
Moravian Church	5
Seventh Day Baptist Churches	5
Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America	2
Mennonite Church	1

All of the above named churches are national,

denominational organizations, or related to them, which are constituent bodies of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

The following bodies, not members of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and in many instances not ecclesiastical, organizations, are repeseuted in various federations as follows:—

Bodies.	Number of Different Federations
Unitarian Churches	24
Universalist Churches	20
The Young Men's Christian Association	15
The Salvation Army	11
Advent Christian Churches	9
Swedenborgian Churches	6
Swedish Lutheran Churches	4
"Pentecostal"	4
Norwegian & Danish Lutheran Churches	3
English Lutheran Church	2
Volunteers of America	2
"Dunkards"	2
Church of the Brethren	2
Roman Catholic	2
Young Women's Christian Association	2
German Methodist Episcopal Church	2
Swedish Methodist Episcopal Church	2
"Nazarene"	2
Anti-Saloon League	2
"Union" Church	2
Free Methodist Church	1
Welsh Calvinistie	1
Cumberland Presbyterian	1
Calvinistie Methodist	1
"Holiness"	1
Catholie Apostolic	1
Woman's Christian Temperance Union	1
Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal Church	1
United Norwegian Lutheran Church	1
Greek Orthodox	1
Lutheran Missouri	1
Protestant Methodist	1
Norwegian & Danish Methodist Episcopal	1
"First Brethren"	1
"Gospel Tabernacle"	1

"Swedish Tabernacle"	1
Federation Club	1
State Sunday School Association	1
Bible Institute	1
"Olivet Memorial"	1
"Federated Church"	1
Charity Organization Society	1
Lutheran General Council	1
Lutheran Synodical Council	1
Lutheran Slovak Synod	1
Rescue Mission	1
Jews (in an advisory relation)	1

Undoubtedly an injustice is done in this list to the Disciples of Christ, as they are not distinguished in many sections of the country from the Christian Connection. Probably their number should be larger, and that of the Christian Church smaller.

CAUSES OF FAILURE.

In several instances the federations are reported as inactive. The history of federations, thus far made, indicates that failure, where failure has occurred, has been due to one or more of the following causes:—

(1) Original organization by outside appeal without local responsibility and leadership. Wise, patient, and sweet-spirited leadership within a community is essential.

(2) Imitation of an ideal organization, with numerous committees, successful in some other place, but not adapted to the local community. Every community has its own peculiarities, colored and characterized by its history, its traditions, its needs, and its resources. Those who are thoroughly familiar with a community are best able to give shape and form to the local federation.

(3) The adoption of a plan too elaborate and of objects too numerous for the numbers and resources available. A very few objects should be aimed at, at least at the outset; and these should be selected as the objects upon which the greatest number can agree. No federation should undertake to do all the things which are desirable. It must restrict its activities in order to concentrate its forces.

(4) An effort to absorb or supplant organizations and agencies already usefully active. A federation should not become a new denomination, nor a new church, nor even a new agency for doing things, so much as it should be a center of inspiration unto the agencies already active. It is not to compete with other organizations, but rather to exemplify the spirit of coöperation and substitute coöperation for competition. Coöperation is the very essence of federation. Its chief function is to secure the coöperation of acting agencies so that they may work upon the same tasks at the same time with a full understanding of each other's purposes and in harmony with each other's plans. The federation may very properly perform tasks not otherwise provided for.

(5) A too heavy budget of expense. In some cities an Executive Secretary performs a most useful service, representing the members of the Federation in active and abundant labors. In other cities and in some states all of the labor is voluntary and unpaid. The paid official is not a necessity, however desirable he may be. It is better to undertake only those things which voluntary workers can perform, rather than incur excessive financial obligations and break down the organization under a burden of debt.

STANDARDIZATION.

The principles of federation are broader than any stereotyped forms. Some names may be better than others, yet there need not be conformity in names. There may be set forth a "Model" Constitution; and yet a model constitution is only for suggestion.

The same functions cannot be discharged by all federations. Each must do that which its locality needs, and upon which its constituents can agree. Every manner of variety, therefore, may be permissible.

CREEDS

Occasionally an inquiry is made respecting a suitable creed for a federation. Federations are not creed-makers. Their virtue lies in comprehensive

ness rather than exclusiveness. They deal not with the philosophy of religion, but with its practice; they are designed to exemplify a harmony and unity of service in the midst of a variety of faiths, forms and expression. They leave the formulation of creeds to the churches and constituent bodies.

COMMON SOCIAL FUNCTIONS.

Underlying federations, as well as denominations, are local churches, the ultimate unit of membership. These exercise, in reality, common social functions, which are fundamentally preparatory to co-öperation and federation. These common social functions are:—

(1) the church is a social center of acquaintance and friendship, where the human touch prevails; (2) it is a great educational institution in which the proclamation of truth, the explanation of principles of life, and the inculcation of personal duties are constant themes; (3) it is a place of worship, where the deepest and most profound emotions are stirred in the sense of awe, and in expressions of adoration and praise; and (4) it is the means of ministry and service in the community, the place where Christians combine in united good-will and good deeds. These several functions are the common functions of all churches, of whatever denominations.

REAL, BUT NOT IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES

The causes which keep men apart in different communions appear fundamental in character; but are not so far-reaching as at first appears. They are (1) difference in temperament; and by temperament is meant those qualities of mind and heart with which men are born; but these undergo changes in process of time; (2) differences in tastes; and by tastes one means, of course, the results of cultivation, education and habits; all of these, inasmuch as they have grown, are capable of alteration; (3) differences in opinions, shading off into convictions, doctrines and creeds; all of these at bottom, and at best, are but opinions, interpretations of Scrip-

ture and of revelation in all its forms; and these too, if vital, are subject to change; and (4) personal pride, for at root that tenacity, with which people hold to their sect, to their traditions, to their places and their positions, is but that self-complacency and self-assurance which is properly called pride. These four distinctions which keep Christians apart may be in a good measure allowed. Men can worship together and work together, and be members of one organization, even tho they have different temperaments, have cultivated different tastes, and entertain widely differing opinions. Indeed, within a single denomination, or other organization or within a single church, there may be as great, if not greater, differences of opinion, as exist between the central convictions of denominations themselves. We have learned that we do not need to be alike in order to be in one organization. It is the very essence of Protestantism, alas, not always consistently acknowledged! to allow variety, in the right of private judgment, and not require conformity to any standard outside of the individual's conscience.

INTERCOMMUNICATION

It is desirable that every federation have a copy of the "Directory of State and Local Federations in the United States" (published by the Federal Council of Churches at ten cents a copy). This Directory may serve the following purposes:—

(1) It defines the kinds and the characteristics of federations, and indicates the extent to which different denominations are enlisted in the federative movement.

(2) It contains the data, in good measure, for an history of federations.

(3) It indicates many of the functions and activities of federations, and even some of the causes of weakness and decay among federations.

(4) By its use those who publish literature upon federation in any of its forms may render a great service to the cause of federation by sending copies of their publications to federations similar to their own; and those who desire information concerning the experiments and the experiences of other federa-

tions may use the addresses given in writing to federations similar to their own in other states or other communities for information. This interchange of publications is highly desirable.

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Chairman of the Commission on State and Local Federations.
Lewiston, Maine.

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